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Ministry of Forests and Range

CARIBOO-CHILCOTIN RECEIVES BEETLE FUNDING

VICTORIA – Communities in the Cariboo-Chilcotin will benefit from another $900,000 to help address the economic impacts of the mountain pine beetle infestation, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman and Dick Harris, Member of Parliament for Cariboo–Prince George, announced today.

"The Province is working closely with communities affected by the mountain pine beetle infestation to help them deal with the short-term effects of the infestation and encourage long-term economic stability," Coleman said. "As we implement the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, we are drawing on local expertise to ensure practical solutions."

The Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition will receive $900,000 to support economic diversification efforts. The Coalition received $1.6 million in 2005. Since then, the Coalition has worked to develop a comprehensive package of background reports and strategies to manage the beetle's environmental, economic and social impacts. Most recently, the Coalition has developed a Secondary Wood Products Strategy, which aims to double the size of the sector by 2017.

"We are taking immediate action with our provincial partners to control the spread of the beetle," said Harris. "Our government is also focusing on the economic infrastructure of communities that have been affected by the infestation. We are committed to new initiatives that will help modernize and rebuild areas such as the Cariboo-Chilcotin region."

The additional funding will allow the Coalition to complete its comprehensive Regional Community Economic Diversification Strategy for the Cariboo-Chilcotin region.

"The CCBAC is determined that our communities will not only survive the mountain pine beetle infestation but that we will prosper," said 100 Mile House Mayor Donna Barnett, also the chair of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition. "This support and funding from the Province strengthens our ability to meet that challenge."

The Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition includes representatives from the municipalities of 100 Mile House, Quesnel, Williams Lake, the Cariboo Regional District, and First Nations, and from the forest industry and conservation sectors.

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The Province's comprehensive Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan is designed to mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of the infestation. For more information, or to download a copy, visit www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle online.

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